

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 OMB-01 DPW-01 SR-02 ORM-03 RSR-01 /146 W
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R 230817 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 569

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 6987

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW
FOR PERIOD APR. 15-21,

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL DANANG 22 APR 73
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 434

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJ: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW
FOR PERIOD APRIL 15-21, 1973

BEGIN SUMMARY: FIGHTING IN MR I CONTINUED ALONG NOW FAMILIAR LINES DURING THE WEEK; THE HEAVIEST CONTACTS WERE IN THE 1 ST DIVISION AO NORTHWEST OF HUE. COMMUNIST PRESSURE IN THIS AREA IS OF CONCERN BUT DOES NOT OF ITSELF CAUSE UNDUE ALARM. HOWEVER, WHEN REGARDED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE INTENSIVE COMMUNIST EFFORT TO BUILD UP WESTERN QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN PROVINCES, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE MILITARY INITIATIVE IS IN THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS. THE LONG RANGE OUTLOOK FOR THE CEASEFIRE IN MR I THUS REMAINS LESS THAN HOPEFUL. THE C- F REGION I ICCS TEAM CONTINUED ITS INVESTIGATION INTO THE APRIL 7 DOWNING OF THE TWO ICCS HELICOPTERS. OTHER ICCS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED TO SUFFER FROM OBSTRUCTIONIST TACTICS ON THE
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PART OF THE EAST EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS. THE GVN WAS UNUSUALLY ACTIVE OVER THE PAST WEEK WITH THE PROVINCE CHIEFS THROUGHOUT THE AREA TAKING TO THE HUSTINGS TO REVITALIZE THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION. THE QUANG TRI RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED PHASE I

WITH NEARLY 20,000 PEOPLE MOVING BACK TO THEIR HOMES IN THAT PROVINCE
END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY SITUATION:

A. MILITARY ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT MR I CONTINUED AT MUCH THE SAME LEVELS AS HAVE PREVAILED FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. WHILE WE CHARACTERIZE THIS LEVEL AS "LIGHT"(WHICH IT IS IN COMPARISON TO SEVERAL MONTHS AGO), IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT "LIGHT" MEANS A DAILY INCIDENT RATE IN THE HIGH TWENTIES WITH A HALF- DOZEN ARVN AND A DOZEN COMMUNIST SOLDIERS KILLED ON THE AVERAGE DAY, WITH 30-50 FRIENDLIES WOUNDED IN ADDITION. THIS HARDLY CONSTITUTES A "CEASE FIRE". ENEMY ATTACKS BY FIRE (MOSTLY MORTARS) HAVE RANGED FROM 300 TO 600 ROUNDS DAILY, WHILE FRIENDLY COUNTER- BATTERY AND SUPPORT FIRES HAVE CREPT UP TO THE 2000 MARK SEVERAL DAYS IN THE PAST WEEK.

B. SCATTERED FIGHTING OCCURRED THROUGHOUT THE REGION BUT WAS CONCENTRATED NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS. I CORPS WENT ON 100 PERCENT ALERT ON APRIL 19 IN RESPONSE TO AN EXPECTED COMMUNIST ATTACK ON THE VIETNAMESE MARINE AND AIRBORNE UNITS HOLDING THE NORTHERN LINE IN QUANG TRI. THE ATTACK FAILED TO MATERIALIZE, BUT THE THREAT TEMPORARILY FRUSTRATED GVN INTENTIONS TO SHIFT THESE TWO UNITS SOMEWHAT TO RELIEVE PRESSURE ON THE 1 ST DIVISION.

C. MOST OF THE ACTUAL FIGHTING NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS OCCURRED IN THE 1 ST DIVISION AO, SPECIFICALLY IN THE AREA HELD BY THE 3 RD REGIMENT NORTHWEST OF HUE. THE 3 RD REGIMENT WAS FORCED TO ABANDON FSB BINH MINH, ABOUT 12 KMS NORTHWEST OF HUE, ON APRIL 15. ARVN ENGINEERS ARE CURRENTLY CONSTRUCTING DEFENSE POSITIONS AND LAYING MINE FIELDS IN THIS AREA WHICH COVERS THE APPROACHES TO THE AN LO BRIDGE BETWEEN PHONG DIEN AND HUONG TRA DISTRICTS IN THUA THIEN. SOUTHWEST OF HUE, EX- FSB VEGHEL, WHICH HAS BEEN AN OUTPOST FOR THE 1 ST DIVISION STRONG POINT AT FSB BASTOGNE, PASSED UNDER ENEMY CONTROL DURING THE WEEK.

D. ALTHOUGH THE FIGHTING IN THE 1 ST DIVISION AO HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT, THE COMMUNISTS PRESSURE DOES NOT YET POSE AN ACTUAL THREAT TO THE GVN POSITION NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS IN THE ESTIMATION OF
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I CORPS COMMANDER LTG TRUONG. IT IS, RATHER, THE PORTENT OF THE FUTURE WHICH WORRIES TRUONG. THIS IS EXEMPLIFIED BY PREPARATIONS FURTHER WEST IN QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN, WHERE THE COMMUNISTS CONTINUE THEIR EXTENSIVE PROGRAM OF CONSTRUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF SUPPLIES. TRUCK TRAFFIC OVER THE DAILY EXPANDING WESTERN ROAD NETWORK REMAINS HEAVY. (CONSTRUCTION WAS ALSO OBSERVED ON TWO KORE AIRFIELDS, AT A LUOI IN THUA THIEN AND KAM DUC IN QUANG TIN, DURING THE WEEK.) IN TRUONG' S MIND THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY QUESTION OF THE ENEMY' S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS. WHEN ADDITIONAL MAJOR UNITS TURN THE CORNER SOUTH FROM THE DMZ AND APPEAR IN THE 1 ST DIVISION' S AO, THE STORM SIGNAL WILL BE HOISTED. AT THIS POINT THE ENEMY WILL BE CAPABLE OF A SERIOUS OFFENSIVE THRUST AGAINST HUE AND THE TERRITORY BEHIND THE MARINE/ AIRBORNE LINES. IT IS OBVIOUS TO OBSERVERS IN MRI THAT THE MILITARY INITIATIVE REMAINS IN THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

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R 230817 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 572

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 6987

2. ICCS:

A. THE APRIL 7 HELICOPTER INCIDENT IN WESTERN QUANG TRI REMAINS THE TOPIC OF GREATEST CONCERN WITHIN THE ICCS IN MR I. OVER THE PAST WEEK, THE REGION I INVESTIGATION TEAM TOOK TESTIMONY FROM THE SURVIVING CREW AND PASSENGERS, CONCENTRATING ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE HELICOPTERS WERE OFF COURSE. ALL OF THE DELEGATIONS APPEAR TO BE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS THE CASE. THE CANADIANS, HOWEVER, HOPE THE TEAM WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THE CRASH SITE IN THE COMPANY OF THE SURVIVORS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE HUNGARIANS AT LEAST WILL QUESTION THE CHARGE THAT THE ONE

HELICOPTER

WAS ACTUALLY DESTROYED BY A HEAT- SEEKING MISSILE. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE INQUIRY WILL BE RAPIDLY CONCLUDED. THE INCIDENT HAS ALREADY INHIBITED ICCS ACTIVITIES AS REGARDS AIR OPERATIONS AND INCREASED CONCERN FOR PERSONAL SAFETY IN THE FIELD. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE APRIL 7 TRAGEDY WILL MODIFY THE OFFICIAL BEHAVIOR OF THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS AND THUS RENEW THE FLAGGING CONFIDENCE OF THE CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS IN THE ICCS.

B. DESPITE A PRE- OCCUPATION WITH THE HELICOPTER INVESTIGATION, REGION I AGREED WITH SURPRISING SPEED TO INVESTIGATE A GVN COMPLAINT REGARDING A COMMUNIST ATTACK ON HOANG HAU OUTPOST TO THE NORTHWEST OF HUE. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, THE EAST EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS CONTINUE INSISTING ON THE PRESENCE OF PRG LIAISON OFFICERS FOR THE INVESTIGATIONS.

C. THERE HAS BEEN NO LESSENING OF POLISH AND HUNGARIAN EFFORTS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPEDE THE INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED PRG VIOLATIONS IN REGION II. DURING THE PAST WEEK THE ICCS COMPLETED TWO INVESTIGATIONS WITH UNANIMOUS BUT INNOCUOUS FINDINGS. BOTH OF THE INCIDENTS IN QUESTION- A SAPPER ATTACK ON A BRIDGE IN QUANG NAM AND THE FIRING ON A VNAF HELICOPTER IN QUANG NGAI- HAD OCCURRED AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIONS COULD BE MADE BY THE SUB-REGIONAL TEAMS. THE LENGTHLY DELAY BEFORE ON- SITE INSPECTION, IN LARGE PART DUE TO CONTINUED POLISH- HUNGARIAN OBSTRUCTIONISM, PRECLUDED THE GATHERING OF SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO FIX THE BLAME FOR THE VIOLATIONS ON THE PRG. CANADIAN FRUSTRATION WITH THESE TACTICS IS INCREASING.

3. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY:

AS NOTED ABOVE, THE MAJOR COMMUNIST ACTIVITY DURING THE PERIOD CONTINUED TO BE THE BUILD UP IN THE COMMUNIST- CONTROLLED AREAS IN WESTERN MR I. ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION THAN AROUND HUE, COMMUNIST ACTIVITY WAS GENERALLY RESTRICTED TO MINOR HARASSING ACTIONS AND THE STANDARD GAMUT OF VC/ VCI POLITICAL ACTIVITIES- PROPAGANDA SESSIONS, PROSELYTING OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS AND TAX COLLECTION. IT WAS NOTED IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE THAT COMMUNIST RESISTANCE TO ARVN OPERATIONS AGAINST VC BASES AND THE FRINGES OF CONTESTED AREAS INCREASED. ARVN INTELLIGENCE REPORTED A CAPTURED DOCUMENT WHICH DWELT ON COMMUNIST ALARM AND DISPLEASURE WITH SUCH GVN OPERATIONS, AND CALLED FOR FURTHER EFFORTS TO RESIST ARVN PRESSURE.

4. GVN ACTIVITIES:

A. THE GVN ADMINISTRATION IN MR I SEEMED TO TAKE ON MORE LIFE DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. THE PROVINCE CHIEFS OF THE LOWER FOUR

PROVINCES TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY TO VILLAGES AND HAMLETS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION SERVICES. THE TIMING AND ENERGY WITH WHICH THIS REVATILIZED PROVINCE MOBILE ADVISORY TEAM PROGRAM WAS UNDERTAKEN SUGGEST THAT THE WORD HAS BEEN PASSED FROM SAIGON THAT PRESIDENT THIEU MEANT IT WHEN HE PROMISED A REINVIGORATED GOVERNMENT EFFORT IN HIS MARCH 26 SPEECH IN CAN THO. ONE OTHER GVN PROGRAM DURING THE PERIOD ALSO MOVED TO GOOD EFFECT. A COMBINED TEAM OF GVN INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES VISITED THE BATANGAN PENINSULA IN QUANG NGAI WITH LISTS OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED VC AND VCI STARTING APRIL 14. THIER MESSAGE WAS " RALLY NOW, IT IS YOUR LST CHANCE." EIGHTY HOI CHANH DID RALLY FROM ONE VILLAGE ON PARIL 18 AND ANOTHER 35 FROM A NEARBY VILLAGE ON APRIL 20.

B. REPOPULATION OF SOUTHERN QUANG TRI PROVINCE CONTINUES. BY
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WEEK' S END HAI LANG DISTRICT RESETTLERS NUMBERED NEARLY 20,000, WHICH MARKS COMPLETION OF PHASE I OF THIS PROGRAM ALMOST EXACTLY ON SCHEDULE. PLANNING IS UNDER WAY FOR SUBSEQUENT PHASES. MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THIS PERFORMANCE GOES TO PROVINCE CHIEF COLONEL HA MAI VIET AND HIS INDEFATIGABLE LEADERSHIP. DESPITE THE PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT WHICH THE RETURNING REFUGEES HAVE TO UNDERGO UNTIL ADEQUATE TEMPORARY SHELTER CAN BE SET UP, THEIR MORALE SEEMS SURPRISINGLY GOOD. THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE DISTRICT FROM QL 1 TO HIGHWAY 555, ALONG THE " STREET WITHOUT JOY", IS THE SCENE OF RESETTLEMENT ACTIVITY. THERE IS NO APPARENT EVIDENCE OF APPREHENSION ON THE POINT OF SECURITY BY RESETTLERS DESPITE THEIR CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE AREAS WEST OF THE AN LO- MY CHANH BRIDGES WHERE, AS NOTED ABOVE, THE 3 RD REGIMENT OF THE 1 ST DIVISION HAS NIGHTLY CONTACT WITH ENEMY FORCES.
BROWN UNQUOTE
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